

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. Currently amended claims are shown with additions underlined and deletions in ~~striketrough text~~ except double brackets may be placed before and after the deleted characters to show deletion of five or fewer characters.

1. (CANCELLED)

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10. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A method for producing a molten aluminum alloy-contact member for a casting machine for casting an article from a molten aluminum alloy, comprising the steps of:

forming a Ni alloy layer on a surface of a steel base, thereby forming a body;

burying the body in TiC powder; and

placing the body, together with the TiC powder, in a vacuum heating oven and heating them under vacuum to a temperature at which a liquid phase generates from the Ni alloy, thereby densely bonding the TiC particles to the surface of the Ni alloy layer, the TiC particles repelling molten aluminum alloy.

11. (ORIGINAL) The method for producing a molten aluminum alloy-contact member according to claim 10, wherein after the bonding of the TiC particles to the Ni alloy layer, the member is subjected to a process comprising applying a slurry of a mixture of a binder and a fine ceramic powder comprising at least one of boron nitride (BN), alumina (Al_2O_3) and zirconia (ZrO_2) to the TiC particles, and burning the ceramic powder into the surface of the member.

12. (ORIGINAL) The method for producing a molten aluminum alloy-contact member according to claim 10, wherein the average particle diameter of the TiC powder is in the range of 10-500 nm.

13. (ORIGINAL) The method for producing a molten aluminum alloy-contact member according to claim 10, wherein the Ni alloy layer is formed by thermal spraying of a Ni alloy having the composition of 2.6 to 3.2% of B, 18 to 28% of Mo, 3.6 to 5.2% of Si and 0.05 to 0.22% of C, with the remainder being Ni and unavoidable impurities.

14. - 19. (CANCELLED)